Help Me

By. Cassandra Savage

Growing up as a mixed child life throws me a lot more lemons than it should. Struggling to find my true identity was very hard. I was puzzled with the question if I was adopted just because I was a different color than my mother. Although segregation was long over the feelings people had about “half bread” children were still very much alive in their thoughts and words. My mother tried to raise me to be color blind but as I grew up I started to move closer to see that I was different from all the other kids in class.

In California you were white, black, or Puerto Rican, and there was no in-between. Moving to Pennsylvania was really the changing point of my life; I was becoming a teen, hitting real life as I knew it. Going to school here it seemed to be more noticeable that now I was one of the only colored kids in class. Elementary school was just my observation period, when time to go to middle school came around it was either conforming to what the typical stereotype of a black female was, or just act like you don’t care. I chose to act like I didn’t care and pretend like I already knew who I was.

Being 13, and pre-developing, boys came into the picture. I had dated a white boy at the time which seemed ok to me and no one had anything negative to say about it. It was just one day that it all came down on me… Just arriving to school sitting in the breakfast room one of my friends that happen to be black must have been in a bad mood and decided to take it out on an easy target. Me being the first person he spoke too that morning, I must have said something to open a can of worms.

He didn’t beat around corners or sugar coat it, “Cassie you’re a white lover! An Oreo! Your not black your WHITE!” The only thing that was running through my head was the time my mom was being called a “Niger lover”. My whole sense of what I thought this world really was completely flew out the window. Who you really are defined you as a person and I was a blank piece of paper. It was just a color but I felt as though it was a bad trademark that if your mixed your suppose “to be black”. An Oreo was a word they called half black and half black kids inferring that they may look black but they are white on the inside. An insult to the African American community, I didn’t want to be that person, but I also didn’t want to be that person who can only see color as a personality.

That morning I had to expression, no mood, no personality, just tears. My 6th grade homeroom teacher at the time was Mr. Heffernan, and he took notice to my quickly changed attitude. He asked me to stay after the homeroom bell, he had asked what was wrong. Wanting to keep my cool and not break down and lay it all out and tell him EVERYTING! However I did. I reached my second breaching point in my life. My first was in my fifth grade. A realization and anyalization of everything from beginning to that moment.

Falling to the chair with my hands secreted my face because they were full of tears, I told Mr. Heffernan everything. Narrowly a stranger to me only knowing me for about a school year, I told my small chronicle to the man that I barely knew. For me only being a student, teachers really do seem to take notice to when their student is no longer their student in either a day, or weeks.

He let me speak. Never interrupting. Just listening. At the end of it all he assistated me in recommenting counseling, but only after his own words of trying to help me out. “You were right in your whole life, the way your mother raised you, color is not a personality. What color is a good person? Though I only see you for a few periods I see the kind of person you are, and all though things that young man said you are not.”

Saying that to me had crossed my mind, yet it is much different when you hear it from someone else. An educator of reading, writing, and arithmetic, taught and helped me through one of the most self grasping recognition, and no one or words could tell me who I am. “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me. The biggest lie the world has ever known. Nevertheless don’t let those words make up you as a person because than those statements become the stone and bricks that damage who you are and meant to be. Don’t let the people beneath you over come you by throwing them at you just so they can build themselves above you.”

During a time when I was so young my mind had had enough and was ready to shut down just because of those remarks, but because of Mr. Heffernan’s help I picked myself back up.